

**COUNSELLORS' ROLES IN ENHANCING HUMAN CAPITAL FOR  
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ENUGU EDUCATION ZONE  
OF ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA.**

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***Abstract***

*The study investigated counsellors' roles in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu Education Zone. One research question and one null hypothesis formulated to guide the study was tested at .05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population for the study consisted of 59 school counsellors in the 31 public secondary schools in the area. The number is small and manageable; so no sample was done. The instrument used for data collection was a 6-item questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts from Faculty of Education, one from measurement and evaluation and two from Guidance and Counselling all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Mean, with standard deviation and t-test statistics were used for data analysis. The study revealed, among others that counsellors ought to help in gathering information about client that will aid them in understanding their strengths and weaknesses through appraisal services. Secondly, it was also found out that there is no significant relationship between the mean ratings of male counsellors and female school counsellors in their role towards enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study recommended, among others, that Government should create an avenue for*

*public sensitization on the need for skills acquisition, entrepreneurship and innovative training so as to enhance human capital for sustainable development.*

***Keywords: Counsellors' Role, Human Capital and Sustainable Economic Development***

## **INTRODUCTION**

Human capital development is a roadmap for sustainable economic development in developing countries, such as Nigeria, and the role of government for accelerating economic development is very fundamental because it is usually difficult for a country to improve the quality of life of its populace without sustainable economic development. Contextually, human capital is the aggregate of knowledge, skills and ability that enable people to discharge their tasks efficiently and effectively. Human capital is the stock of competencies, knowledge, social and personality attributes, including creativity, cognitive abilities, embodied in the ability to perform labour so as to produce economic value (Adelakun, 2011 in Odo, Eze & Onyeishi, 2016). However, it can also be define as a form of intangible capital (material), which involves skills competencies and other knowledge that workers have or acquire through education and training that yields valuable productive services to an establishment (firm) (Chigbu, 2016). In line with the above assertion on human capital, Saad & Kalakech, (2009) affirm that to achieve human capital there is need for the expansion and repair of infrastructure, the improvement of education and health services, and the encouragement of foreign and local investments among others. Thus, for human capital to be efficient, the human capital resources have to raise labour productivity quickly and effectively. By this means human capital development may be achieved.

Human capital development is said to be the sum total of processes that are geared towards training, education and other interventions so as to enhance the level of knowledge, skills, abilities, values and social assets of citizens, which will culminate in the citizens' effective performance in their various sectors of the nation's economy. This, by extension will help in enhancing sustainable economic development of the nation. Though, in this study, there is dire need to ascertain the roles of counselling in enhancing sustainable economic development especially in Enugu State. Counselling for enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development indicates that education should be repositioned to be more of practical oriented than theory in both formal and non formal settings. So in education, school curricular, should be reviewed periodically to provide education that embraces the three domains (cognitive, psychomotor and affective) of learning. Moreover, there is great need for diversifying the counselling curricula and repositioning the counselling profession so as to incorporate the necessary contents required for an enhanced, effective and efficient human capital development (Obi, Ima, Akpojivi & Ulo, 2019). In lieu of the above, the professional counsellors should be equipped with necessary skills and knowledge needed to impart on the clients the counselling services and strategies needed to empower the youth through human capital development for sustainable economic development.

The role of counsellors in enhancing human capital development through education, according to Chibber (2009) are:

- to monitor the academic progress of students studying in the institution;

- to acquaint the students with the prescribed curriculum;
- to identify the academically gifted, backward, creative and other categories of special learners;
- to cater for the educational needs of special learners;
- and, to assist students in getting information about further education.

By doing these, the abilities, interest, and talents of students can be assessed. Counsellors can therefore encourage the development of students' talents and strengths. When educators view the successful development of talents in students with optimism and hope, more opportunities for school success may occur. Educators and counsellors' roles can also help students to learn higher-order problem solving and information processing skills. As students' academic performances improve, students' self confidence increases and this will in turn enable the students to understand that they can perform assigned duties at work and they will readily pursue their desired careers with ease. Indubitably, when all these are achieved, it may boost human capital development and thereby sustain economic development. Counsellors also can help to encourage both teachers and parents to find enrichment opportunities that will positively engage students, thus, possibly focusing on mentorships. (Onuorah & Onovo, 2019). When mentorship is enriched through teachers, parents and counsellors, students shall be fortified through human capital for better performance and expertise. The labour market will be crowded with talented and skillful youths that will stand the test of time in sustaining economic development. However, the indication of the above assertion means that counsellors may play different roles in equipping and facilitating human capital development.

Human capital development encompasses the growth and expansion in the capacities and abilities acquired by individuals; group and societies that enable them perform assigned responsibilities for the attainment of predetermined goals (Yunusa, Samuel & Hussain, 2020). However, human capital development cannot be achieved without knowledge economy. Thus, knowledge economy is the aftermath of education. Education is a conscious and unconscious acquisition of knowledge and skills, which triggers the development of cognitive reasoning and rational judgement for effective and efficient societal functionality. It is the pathfinder of development, enlightenment and intellectual, maturity (Nwangwu, 2019). It is the engine that drives both human and national developments. It has the attributes and characteristics of shaping the destiny and achievement of any nation. Emphatically, it can be stated that it is the input quality and quantity of human capital that determines what the educational institutions turnout into the labour market.

Most human capital theorists recognize the relationship between education and development. The theory posits that education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive skills possessed by the workforce. The theory that people invest in education in order to increase their stock of human capital was propounded by Theodore, Gary & Jacob in Babalola (2003). Proponents of this theory perceived human capital as the stock of economically productive human capabilities, which is a product of innate abilities and investments in human beings, the provision of education

is perceived as a productive investment in human capital, which the proponents of human capital theory have evaluated to be as equally or even more worthwhile than investments in physical capital. Physical capital is a tangible material used as inputs (machinery, building and land) in the production of goods and services (Chigbu, 2016). Thus, it is usually said that the brain (person) behind the machine is more important than the machine itself. Though both human and physical capital are combined together and used in the course of production to ensure maximum productivity. Thus, the greater the provision of physical capital (building schools and institution) the greater the stock of human capital in society, and this eventually will increase the national productivity and economic growth and development. In the same accord, writing on the relationship between education and development, Harbinson in Nwangwu (2019) notes that:

*“Human resources and capital, not income or material resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social economic and political organizations, and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else (p.21).*

Hence, with the above assertion, it is important to note that human capital development is important in ensuring the needed sustainable economic development.

Sustainable development is economic, social and environmental development that ensures the well being and dignity of human’s ecological integrity, gender equality and social justice, now and in the future (Wanamaker in Chigbu, Oguzie & Obi, 2020). Sustainable development is seen as a construct, which envisions development as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the futures (Emas, 2015). For development to be sustainable, it must not only be geared towards generation and accumulation of wealth but also ensure social equality and amelioration of abject poverty in the society.

The overall goal of sustainable development is anchored on long-term stability of the economy and environment. In like minds, Iloh (2015) sees sustainable development as a requirement for balancing environmental, societal and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. Interestingly, as sustainable economic development is interwoven with improved quality of life, then in the researchers motivation in this context is that it becomes imperative to ascertain the possible roles of a counsellor in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development. However, when quality of life is not improved then there exist a basis for questioning human capital development for sustainable economic development. When the above context is in question then there is bound to be increase in global warming, political and economic instability, high rate of inflation, brain drain, psycho social problems and extreme poverty. It is against

this background that the researchers are poised to investigate the counsellors role in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu state.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of this study was to determine counsellors roles in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu state.

Specifically, the study sought to

1. Ascertain the roles of school counsellors in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu state.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

This research question was raised to guide the study.

1. What are the roles of the school counsellors in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu state?

### **HYPOTHESIS**

This null hypothesis was formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

Ho<sub>1</sub>. There is no significant difference between the mean responses scores of male and female school counsellors on their roles in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu state.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design and was conducted in the 31 secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu state, Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of all the 59 school counsellors currently serving in the 31 secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu state. The population is small and manageable so no sampling was done. The researchers developed a self-structured instrument called Counsellor Role and Human Capital Development Scale (CRH-CD) with 4-point response format. The instrument has 6 items and was face validated by three experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation and two from Guidance and Counselling all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The internal consistency of CRH-CD was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate. A similar population of 17 school counsellors from Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State was used during the pilot study. The data collected from the pilot study was analysed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate and the reliability coefficient stood at .65. To collect data for the study, the researchers employed the assistance of two research assistants. 61 copies of CRH-CD were distributed to the respondents but the researchers and their assistance retrieved 51 copies signifying 87% return of dully filled copies of the administered instrument. Mean, standard deviation and grand mean were used to answer the research question while the t-test statistic was used to test the research hypothesis at .05 level of significance. The decision rule for the interpretation of the respondents responses was that for any items whose mean score is equal to or greater than 2.50 is regarded as agree, while any item whose mean score is less than 2.50 is regarded as disagree. For the research hypothesis, the decision rule was that if the calculated t-value is greater than the table t value at a chosen confidence level (.05) and a degree of freedom ( $n_1 - n_2 - 2$ ) the null hypothesis of no

significant difference is rejected, on the other hand if the calculated t-value is less than the value of the t-critical from the table, then the null hypothesis is not rejected.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

The analyzed data were presented in Table 1 and 2 in accordance with the research question and hypothesis that guided the study.

**Research Question 1:** what are the roles of school counsellor in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State?

**Table 1: Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) Rating with Standard Deviation of the Role of school Counsellor in Enhancing Human Capital for Sustainable Economic Development in Enugu Education, Zone.**

S/N	Counsellors Role in Enhancing Human SA Capital for Sustainable Economic Development	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
1.	To assist in placement services which suit students personality characteristics/interest intelligence and aptitude.	23	17	9	2	3.20 0.87	Agree
2.	To pay for students acquisition of skills, education and training.	07	9	15	20	2.06 1.06	Disagree
3.	To provide students with information about various available educational and career opportunities in the society.	21	19	9	2	3.16 0.86	Agree
4.	To build the capacities and self efficacy of students to face stressful situations through counselling services.	27	11	9	4	3.20 1.00	Agree
5.	Encouraging the development of knowledge economy through sensitizing students on skill empowerment.	21	12	11	7	2.92 1.09	Agree
6.	To help in gathering information about client that will aid them in understanding their strength and weakness through appraisal services.	31	11	7	23.	39 0.87	Agree
<b>N=51</b>		<b>Grand Mean</b>			<b>2.98</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Data presented in Table 1 reveals that the respondents agreed with 5 of the items. Out of the 6 identified roles of school counsellors in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu Education Zone. The items they agreed with are 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 with mean scores of 3.20, 3.16, 3.20, 2.92 and 3.39 respectively. They however disagreed with item 3 as their recorded mean score is 2.06. The values of their standard deviation ranged from 0.87 to 1.09, which indicated that the respondents were not too far from the mean and from the opinion of one another in their responses, the items were valid. The respondents recorded a grand mean score of 2.98, which is above the 2.50 benchmark, indicating that roles of school counsellors in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu Education Zone are to assist in placement services which suit students personality characteristics/interest, intelligence and aptitude, to provide students with information about various available educational and career opportunities in

the society, to build the capacities and self efficacy of students to face stressful situations through counselling services, to encourage the development of knowledge economy through sensitizing students on skill empowerment and to help in gathering information about client that will aid them in understanding their strength and weakness through appraisal services.

**Research Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses scores of male counsellors and female counsellors on their roles in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu Education Zone.

**Table 2: T-test Result of the Mean Rating of Male and Female Counsellors on their Roles in Enhancing Human Capital for Sustainable Economic Development in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.**

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	T-Calculated	T-
Critical	DECISION					
Female Counsellors		15	2.98	0.96		
				51	0.93	$\pm 1.96$
NS (Do not reject)						
Male Counsellors	36	2.93	0.93			
Significant at P .05, df = 51, critical t-value = $\pm 1.96$						

The t-test analysis in table 2 above indicates that the calculated t-value is 0.93, while the critical t-value is  $\pm 1.96$  at .05 level of significance. This implies that the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value. Thus, there is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male counsellors and female counsellor on their roles in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings in table 1 revealed that the roles of school counsellors in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development in Enugu Education Zone are to assist in placement of students according to their personality, ability and aptitude, rendering appraisal services through gathering of useful information about students for education and career opportunities, helping the students on the way to face their challenges through counselling services and sensitizing students on the need for skills empowerment. This is in agreement with Yunusa, Samuel & Hussain, (2020) who identified the roles of counsellors in enhancing human capital development through information, counselling, appraisal, placement and follow up services.

**CONCLUSION**

This study has adequately captured the intersection between human capital and sustainable economic development by viewing human capital as the active agent and driving force for

all other factors of production. Additional attempt was made to ascertain the roles of counsellors in enhancing human capital for sustainable economic development.

To the above extent, it was identified that counsellors have tremendous roles to play towards enhancing human capital, by adding value to the knowledge economy, assisting in the placement of students based on abilities, personality and aptitude, rendering appraisal services, sensitization and skills empowerment.

In conclusion therefore, for counsellors to vigorously pursue and fulfill these roles, the government needs to put certain measures in place to ensure effective sensitization, integrating counselling services into the programme across sectors of the economy, financing existing skills and entrepreneurship related programmes and giving adequate recognition to the esteemed roles of counsellors towards sustainable economic development.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommend that;

1. Government should keep abreast the functionality and services of a professional Counsellor to a high esteem, thus, this they should do by expanding, retrieving, updating, upgrading and evaluating counselling curriculum with all innovative skills and knowledge for sustainable economic development.
2. The roles of counsellors should be imbibed from the grassroots of human development, nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary. Their roles and office should not also be neglected in all spheres of life, parastatals, organization and institutions.
3. Government should create an avenue for public sensitization on the need for skill acquisition, entrepreneurship and innovative training.
4. Nigeria Universities should introduce and advice new programme in our various universities to build up youths in their various capacity and aptitude in skills and entrepreneurship related courses, for example entrepreneurship and skills development study, vocational and technical study, poverty reduction study, peace and conflict resolution, environmental protection, agriculture environmental study and psychomotor learning and developmental study.

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